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JULY 1985

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Turn to Page 13
for 'THE SAGA OF
SRI JAGANNATH'



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"You mean cavities, love."

"Yes... that's what I mean. But then I showed him my teeth, mummy. And told him about my nice toothpaste. The tasty, foamy one."

"Forhan's Fluoride, my dear."

"Oh yes... I told him I use it because you say it's good. And because I like it."

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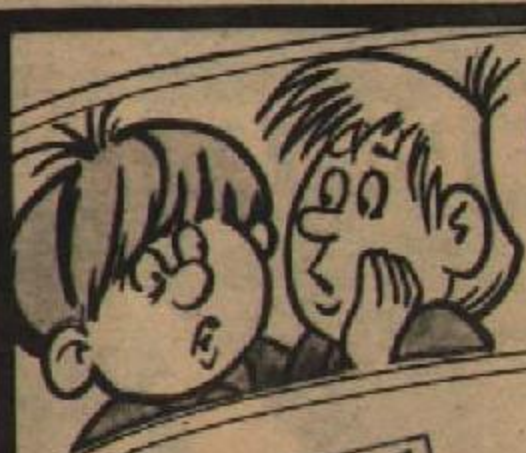
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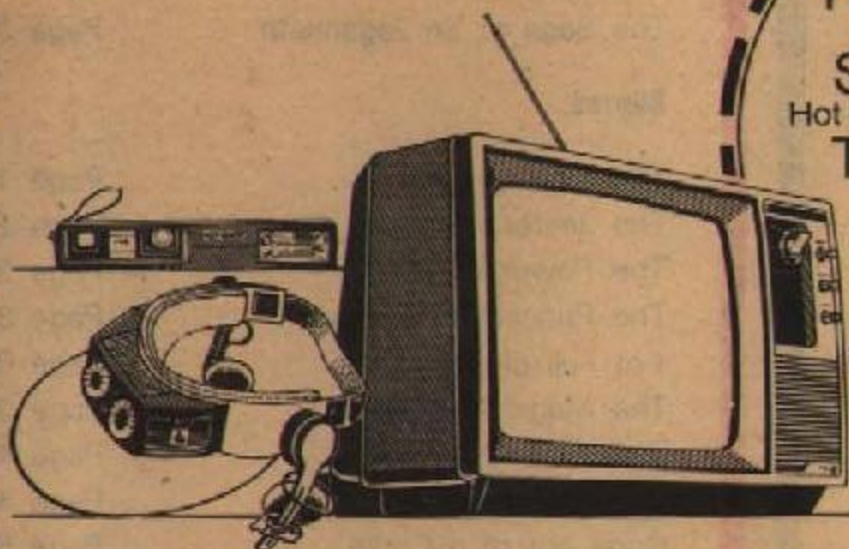
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11. Mauser			
12. Fortune			

Hurry! Contest closes on 15 July, '85.

NEXT ISSUE

- **A LOG HEAVIER THAN A HILL!**—A critical situation in the **SAGA OF SRI JAGANNATH**.
- **AMARNATH:** *The absorbing story of the Deity built by Nature in our new series, TEMPLES OF INDIA, through pictures.*
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Thoughts to be Treasured
It does not require money to be neat, clean and dignified.

—Mahatma Gandhi

Printed by B.V. REDDI at Prasad Process Private Ltd. and published by B. VISWANATHA REDDI for CHANDAMAMA CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (Prop. of Chandamama Publications), 188 Arcot Road, Madras-600 026 (India).

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CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

GREETINGS

With this issue your magazine steps into the 16th year of publication. The first thing we feel like doing on this occasion is to greet you, our dear readers, who have sustained us with love through formidable difficulties.

In recent years there has been a growth in magazines even for the young. However, like the old good moon in the sky not losing its importance despite the invention of numerous colourful lights on the earth, *Chandamama* continues to shine in tens of thousands of hearts. It is because "*Chandamama* is not just a magazine; it is a friend-philosopher-guide", as a reader put it. There are many publications to amuse and inform the children. *Chandamama* too does that. But *Chandamama* does much more; it helps the young to grow in their consciousness, grow in the direction of Truth and Light.



अरावप्युचितं कार्यमातिथ्यं गृहमागते ।

छेतुः पार्श्वगतौ छायां नोपसंहरते द्रुमः ॥

Arāvapyucitaṁ kāryamātithyaṁ gṛhamāgate

Chetuh pārsvagaṭāṁ chāyāṁ nopasaṁharate drumaḥ

Extend your hospitality even to an enemy if he becomes your guest. A tree does not refrain from giving shade even to the fellow who is chopping it.

—The Hitopadeshah





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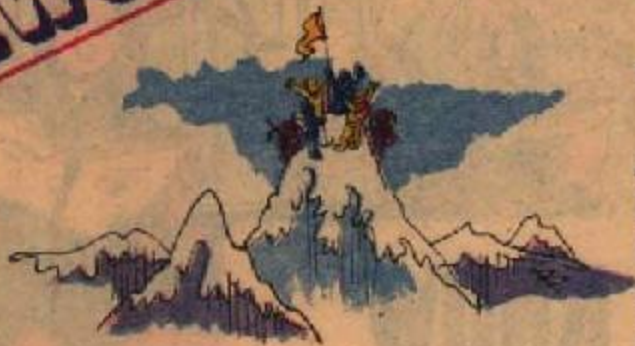


and foil-board carton
to keep it fresh.



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NEWS FLASH



Three Cheers!

A six-member team of students from the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, has successfully scaled the 6,349-metre high Phawararang peak in the Kinnaur Himalayas.

For the Children, By the Children

Asia's biggest film complex for children and India's first, will be established on the outskirts of Bangalore, at a cost of Rs. 6 crores to 8 crores. "Hopefully, films would be made not only for children, but also by children," says Amol Palekar, Chairman of the Children's Film Society of India.



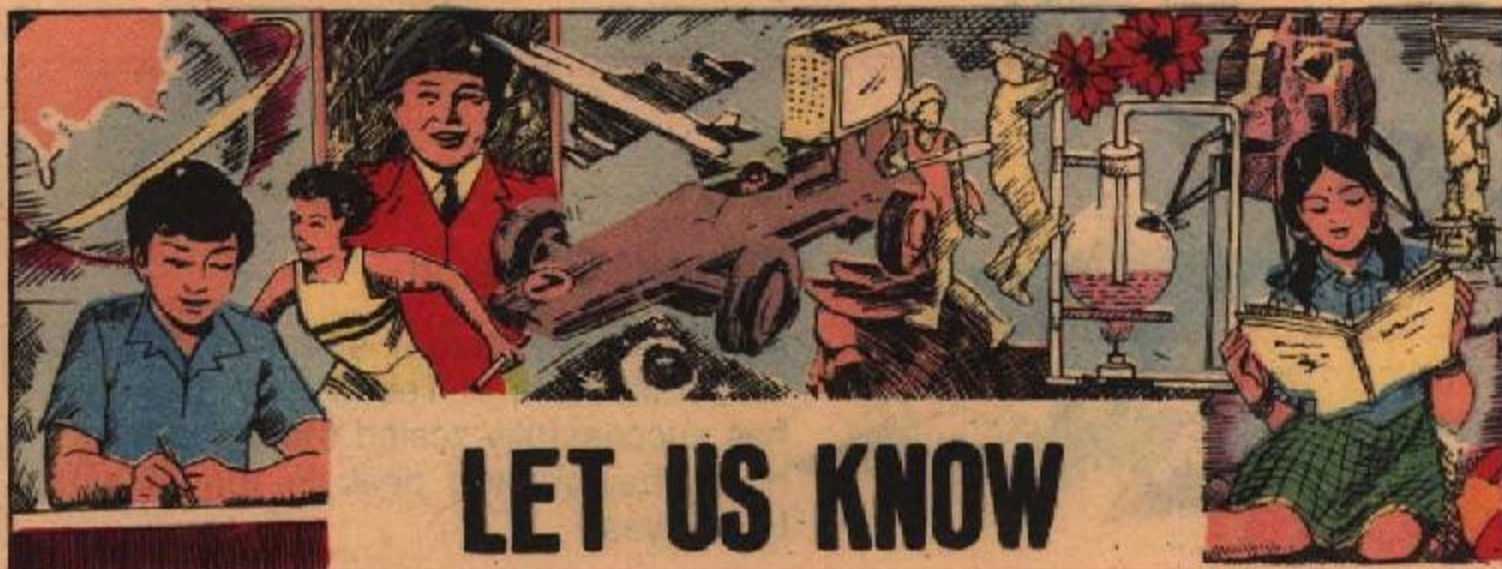
The Oldest Dinosaur

A dinosaur skeleton more than 225 million years old has been found in a desert in Arizona. Mr. Rob Long, an expert from the University of California says that this could be the oldest ever dinosaur-skeleton found in the world.

Lost City in the Jungles

A team of young explorers have discovered the remains of a legendary lost city in the jungle of Honduras. The city was built by the Payas, a red Indian tribe, thousands of years ago.





LET US KNOW

Is it true that great men are epileptic?

—*Surendra Bhaduri, Kharagpur.*

No, though some great men suffered from epilepsy. Among them were Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great and the renowned Russian novelist Dostoevsky.

Why is the famous tower in Paris, near which the Festival of India began, is called Eiffel Tower?

—*Vishnu Dubey and friends, Lucknow.*

It is so named after Alexander Gustave Eiffel, its designer. He also designed the Statue of Liberty installed at New York Harbour.

What is John Bull?

—*Lalitha Subramaniam, Madurai.*

It is the nickname for an Englishman or for all the Englishmen. The name, in this sense, was first used by Dr. John Arbuthnot in his satire, *Law is a Bottomless Pit*, published in 1712. It is not known whether he invented the name or it was already in vogue.

What is Zionism?

—*Vivek Acharya, Bombay.*

Zionism is the faith among the Jews that they ought to have a separate state for themselves. This faith was made into a mission by Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), a Hungarian Jew. It gradually gathered momentum resulting in the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948. Zionism has not come to an end after the achievement of this object, but is a living force particularly among the Jews living outside Israel, used to safeguard the interest of Israel and Jews in general.

The Saga Of SRI JAGANNATH

—By Manoj Das

(Story so far: Vidyapati, sent by King Indradyumna to trace the physical presence of the Lord's symbol lying in secret somewhere, reaches the abode of the tribal chief, Visvvasu, and marries his daughter, Lalita. Upon his insistence, he is led to a cave, blind-folded, where Visvvasu worships some mysterious object. He carries with him a handful of mustard seeds and scatters them along the way. As soon as the bandage is removed from his eyes inside the cave, Vidyapati sees a dazzling blue light and the vision of Krishna.)

THE ESCAPE

Visvvasu was a man of few words. When he realised that Vidyapati was not willing to say why he was so surprised, he did not repeat his question.

Vidyapati was brought back home in the same manner he had been led into the cave—blind-folded. Lalita was eagerly

awaiting his return. "What did you see?" she asked excitedly.

"Well, nothing very much! What miracle can one expect inside a gloomy cave?" said Vidyapati.

Indeed, he must not tell even Lalita the miracle he had experienced. He alone knew how



painful it was to keep it a secret from her. Never before in life he had suffered so much anguish. The king had vested in him a great trust. He knew very well that Indradyumna was no ordinary king, but one who had been inspired to accomplish a great task. It is true, he should not keep anything hidden from Lalita, but she was Lalita, after all? He met her and married her only because he had set out on his mission. Shouldn't his first obligation be to his mission?

But the matter was much more serious than merely keeping something hidden from Lalita. He realised that what Visva-

vasu worships is the symbol of Vishnu. If he is to be faithful to his mission, he must decamp with the object which Visvavasu worships! That will be betraying the faith of Lalita and Visvavasu! That will be treachery!

He argued with himself: Visvavasu did not trust him. Had he trusted him, he would not have obliged him to visit the cave blind-folded. So Vidyapati will only outwit Visvavasu, not betray him.

But arguments are arguments. They cannot truly resolve any conflict. Vidyapati could not sleep for nights together. He remained absent-



minded during the day. Lalita was at a loss to understand what was happening to her husband. Was he unhappy because he married her? Was he missing the pomp and show of the life in the king's court?

"Not the pomp and show, Lalita," Vidyapati at last told Lalita in reply to her repeated query, "but my home. A long time has elapsed since I left the city. My people must be wondering where I am. Should I not see my anxious parents? I am pensive at the thought of leaving you. Surely, I cannot propose that you accompany me. Your father will miss you so much!

Besides, people of my society will look at you with such curiosity that you'll feel quite uncomfortable."

"How do I care as long as you continue to look at me in the way you do now!" Lalita's voice was clear, but soon it grew weak when she said, "But who will look after father? Can I leave him?"

"You cannot and you should not. But if you allow me to go, I'll come back soon."

"Will you? Do you promise?"

"How can I do otherwise, Lalita? Can I remain without you?"

Vidyapati's words brought



tears to Lalita's eyes. "Go then," she said. "Tell your parents how eagerly I look forward to the day when I can be blessed by them."

Soon Visvvasu was informed of Vidyapati's desire to go home. He proposed to send many gifts with him. "No," said Vidyapati dissuading him. "There will be a time for that—when Lalita will accompany me. First, let me break the news of my marriage to my parents."

"Let it be so," said Visvvasu and he arranged a horse for his son-in-law.

The monsoon had just set in. Vidyapati took leave of Visvvasu and a tearful Lalita. Slowly he disappeared from their sight.

It was not difficult for him to find the row of tender sprouts that had emerged from the mustard seeds he had scattered. He

followed the path they indicated. In a few minutes he reached the cave. At its mouth rocks were placed in an intricate fashion to check one's easy entry into it. Vidyapati dismounted from his horse and made his way carefully.

Inside the cave he was thrilled once again. There was no time to lose. "O God, I'm acting according to the best of my inspiration. If I'm doing wrong, pardon me."

He picked up the small stone casket on which Visvvasu had placed flowers hours ago. He put it in his bag and went out and hopped onto his horse. He then galloped at great speed. Though not sure of the way, he had the feeling that some superior force will guide him out of the forest all right.

—To continue



THE TRAILING CURSE

Some villagers were on a visit to the town. They lodged in a free guest-house.

A thief entered the house when the villagers were out in the bazar. He collected their old clothes which they had hung for drying and escaped.

He went to a market and tried to sell his booty. But who would care to buy old clothes? The thief waited for some naive buyers to fall a prey to his offer.

Suddenly there appeared before him a monkey which began to dance and make somersaults. When the thief's attention was

on it, the master of the monkey quietly removed the clothes heaped behind him. Needless to say, the master of the monkey too was a thief and he used the monkey to distract the attention of those who could be his victims.

When the first thief realised that the clothes were gone, he was quite upset. He raised a hue and cry, but nobody could help him.

Next day, in another part of the market, the thief saw a stranger selling some well-packed clothes. "I had a shop,



but I am now winding up my business. That is why I am giving away my things extremely cheap," the stranger declared.

The packets looked new, but they were sealed. The thief found the price of the items very cheap indeed. He was about to open a packet to examine the quality of the stuff inside it when the stranger said, "No, gentleman, you're not allowed to open them before buying. As it is, I'm giving them away so cheap. Any fool can see that."

The thief felt sure that he can sell the goods at a much higher price. He bought the whole lot. The stranger left the place with the money.

The thief, curious to see the goods he bought, opened a packet. To his shock, he saw it to be one of the pieces of old

clothes he had stolen from the guest-house. He opened all the packets and saw that they were all the clothes he had lost earlier. The stranger had just packed them in new covers. "I was a fool not to see what was inside!" he said with a sigh.

"When I stole them," he thought, "I had to suffer the pangs of fear. When I lost them, I had to suffer the pangs of disappointment. As if that was not enough, I had to pay for them too. All this is surely due to the curse of the poor villager which is trailing me. I don't know how much more suffering will come to me if I keep them any longer," he thought.

Slowly he approached the guest-house and threw the bundle of clothes into the dormitory in which the villagers lay asleep.

(Adapted)



Oliver Twist



In London, his new friend "The Artful Dodger" takes Oliver to Fagin, an old frightful-looking man in squalid quarters. Fagin welcomes Oliver among other viagrant boys there and they all teach him the 'game' of pick-
ing pockets.



Then it was Oliver's turn. "See if you can take this handkerchief from my pocket without me feeling it." Fagin said. Oliver held the bottom of the pocket with one hand as he had seen the Dodger hold it, and draw the handkerchief lightly out of it with the other. "You're a clever boy," Fagin said. "I never saw a sharper lad. Here's a shilling for you."



For many days Oliver remained in Fagin's room, doing very little except playing the game which Fagin insisted they should all play every morning. The Dodger and Charlie went out to work every day and when they came home at nights empty-handed, he would berate them for their idle and lazy habits. On one occasion he went so far as to knock them both down a flight of stairs. That same night, Fagin told Oliver that he was sending him out to work with the two other boys. "I see a very promising career ahead of you, my dear," Fagin said.

The three boys went out. Presently, in a narrow court, the Dodger made a sudden stop. "Do you see that old cove at the bookstall?" the Dodger whispered. "He'll do very nicely," said the other boy. Oliver was, of course, greatly surprised, but he was not permitted to make any enquiries.





The Artful Dodger walked stealthily across the road and stood close behind the elderly gentleman. Then, to Oliver's alarm and horror, he saw the Dodger, plunge his hand into the old man's pocket and draw from there a handkerchief.

In the same instant, the whole mystery of Fagin's desire to play games which involved picking pockets became clear to young Oliver. Confused and frightened, he took to his heels.

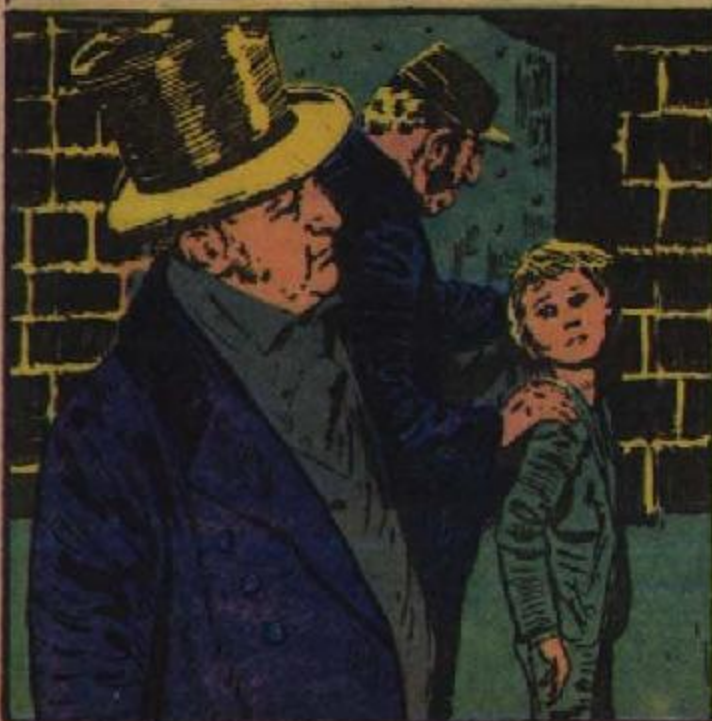


At the very moment Oliver began to run. The old gentleman, putting his hand to his pocket and missing his handkerchief, turned sharp around. Seeing Oliver running away, he raised his voice and shouted, "Stop, thief," and then made after Oliver book in hand.



Others took up the cry, and soon Oliver was being chased by a host of angry citizens who gained on him at every instant. A blow stopped Oliver at last. As he fell to the pavement, the crowd gathered eagerly around him. Covered with mud and dust, Oliver looked wildly at the faces that surrounded him.

A police officer arrived and seizing Oliver by the collar, pulled him to his feet. "Don't hurt him," the old gentleman said compassionately. "Oh, I won't hurt him," the officer said, dragging Oliver roughly along the street. The gentleman walked with them to a place called Mutton Hill, with a passage into a dirty courtyard. Here they encountered a stout man with a bunch of keys in his hand. "What's the matter?" said the man carelessly.

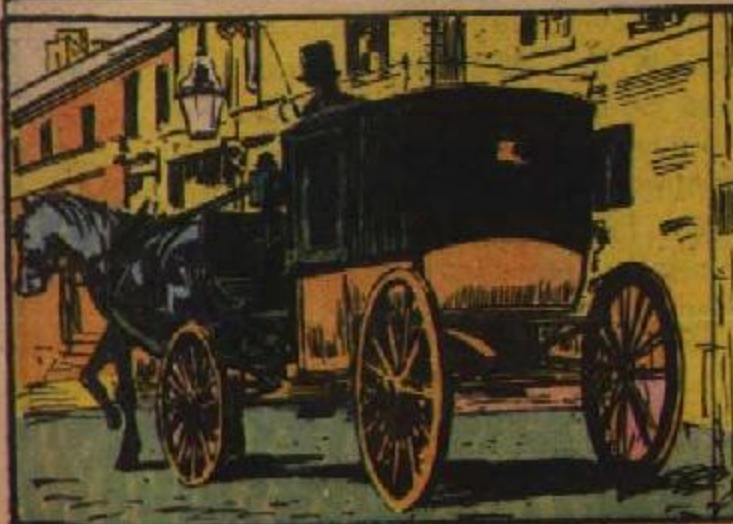


"A young pickpocket," the officer told him. Oliver was then pushed through a door which led to a stone cell, where he was searched and then locked up, obviously much to the dismay of the old gentleman. "There is something in that boy's face," said the old gentleman to himself. "He looks like someone I remember..."



Presently, Oliver was removed from the cell and taken with the old gentleman to see a certain Mr. Fang, the magistrate who was well known for his severity. "How do you propose to deal with this case?" his clerk asked in a low voice, after Mr. Fang had studied the policeman's report. "Summarily," replied Mr. Fang. "He stands committed for three months—hard labour, of course."

On hearing this, poor Oliver fainted. And it was at this point that an unexpected guest entered. "Turn that man out," ordered Mr. Fang. "I will not be turned out," cried the man. "I keep the bookshop, and I saw it all. The boy is innocent!" "The poor boy," said the elderly man. "I was sure myself that he was innocent. Call a coach somebody, pray."



After Mr. Fang had reluctantly discharged Oliver, the gentleman, whose name turned out to be Mr. Brownlow, had him in a coach in no time at all. In this manner a new phase of Oliver's life began.

THE JESTER'S CHOICE

The king was unable to sleep that night. He tossed in his bed, now and then heaving sighs. The queen understood that the king was disturbed in mind.

"My lord!" spoke the queen kindly. "Ever since you returned from the court you are putting on an angry look. And now you are unable to sleep. I wonder why?"

The king heaved a deep sigh. He raised his eyebrows and gnashed his teeth. Finally he said, "It is all because of the jester in my court."

"What? A jester! Should a jester be the cause of your wrath?" the queen said curling her lips contemptuously. "You should excuse me, my lord!" she continued. "A jester in the court is expected only to please the king and make him happy. And he has freedom to make light of persons or their actions..."

"You are right!" interrupted the king. "But my jester has misused his freedom. Today he made jest of me."

"Made jest of you!" the queen expressed surprise.





"Yes. And that too in the presence of my courtiers," replied the king fuming with uncontrollable rage.

"What did your jester say?" asked the queen. "Let me share the joke, my lord."

The king saw a fleeting smile on her lips. He stared into her eyes and shouted, "It's no joke. It is an insult!"

The queen thought it unwise to proceed further. "Unpardonable, my lord," she said stressing every word. "It is unpardonable. The jester should be punished with death."

The king looked happy. "Yes. I too have decided on the same

course of action. The insult must be avenged with death." He became calm and closed his eyes. The queen slept with the satisfaction that she had pacified the king. But the king was awake. He was thinking how to insult the jester before killing him.

Before it was daybreak the king had decided what to do.

Beaming with a sense of satisfaction, he went to the court. No sooner had he taken his seat than his eyes looked for the jester.

The jester grinned as usual and saluted the king with both his hands.

"Scoundrel," cried the king. "Yesterday you insulted me on the pretext of joking. And today I shall do away with your jokes together with yourself. You shall be punished with death."

The jester began shivering. With great difficulty he managed to stammer: "My joke was never meant to insult you, your Majesty. It was just a joke!"

"Enough!" cried the king waving his hand at the jester. "I shall hear no more from you!"

The king then beckoned one of his servants to fetch a street dog. The order was immediately

obeyed.

The jester as well as the courtiers were unable to read the mind of the king. While all wondered why the cur was brought into the court, the king said addressing the jester: "Fool! To me you are nothing more than the dog that you see here. I give you the liberty of killing this cur in any manner you like. I will use the same method to kill you."

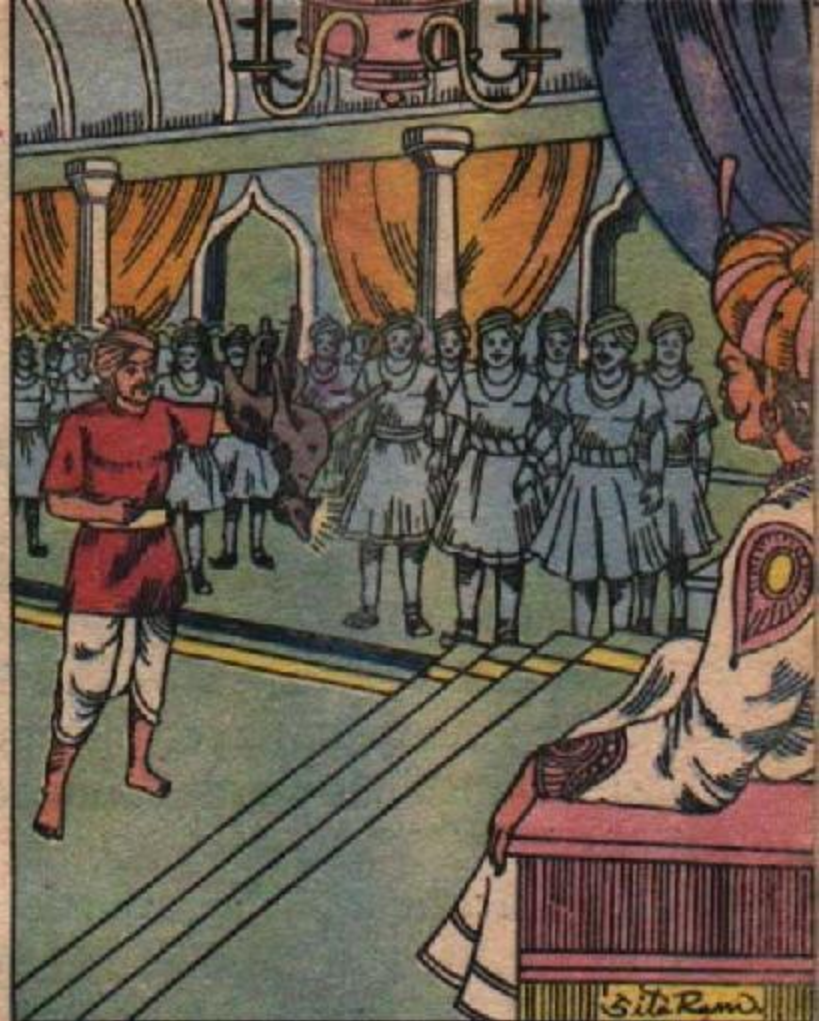
The courtiers waited with bated breaths. The king sat twirling his moustache and smiling mischievously. But the jester remained calm.

"Come on, my boy. What sort of weapon you would like to use for killing this cur?" asked the king.

The jester remained silent. Anxious minutes passed. He went near the cur and gave it a piteous look. The cur, out of fear, began to growl. He then caught hold of the dog by its tail, lifted it above his head and brought it down.

"My lord, I have just demonstrated how I would kill the dog. I would smash it, holding it by the tail. The king can do the same to me."

The king was nonplussed. In



the faces of the courtiers anxiety gave way to smiles. They clapped their hands.

"But I am not going to leave you at that," the king said. "For you, there is no escape from death. If you are not going to die a death according to my choice, I allow you to die as you choose. Now speak! How do you wish to die?"

While the jester remained silent, the Prime Minister stood up and said, "Your Majesty! You are known not only for your valour and strength but also for your wisdom. The accused jester has escaped death by using his wit. Is it not wise to

allow him to live?"

"Yes, your Majesty! I am not very big and I do not occupy much space in your court," pleaded the jester.

The king laughed like a mad devil and told his Prime Minister: "I have decided to kill him. He managed to escape in the first round. But I am sure he will meet his death in the second and last round." His words sounded final.

Sad at heart, the courtiers looked at the jester. They couldn't but admire him when they found no trace of fear on his clownish face.

"Second and last round, my dear jester. Tell me how you wish to die," asked the king again.

The jester moved towards the king and prostrated before him. "Your Majesty!" he said re-

maining in the same position. "Ever since you honoured me with the appointment of the court-jester, you have been kind to me. You have treated me as your good companion. You praised me over my wits and laughed heartily when I joked. I thank you for your kindness. Now that you have permitted me to choose my own death..." He stopped awhile and pouted his lips.

"Speak out!" cried the much eager king. "how do you wish to die?"

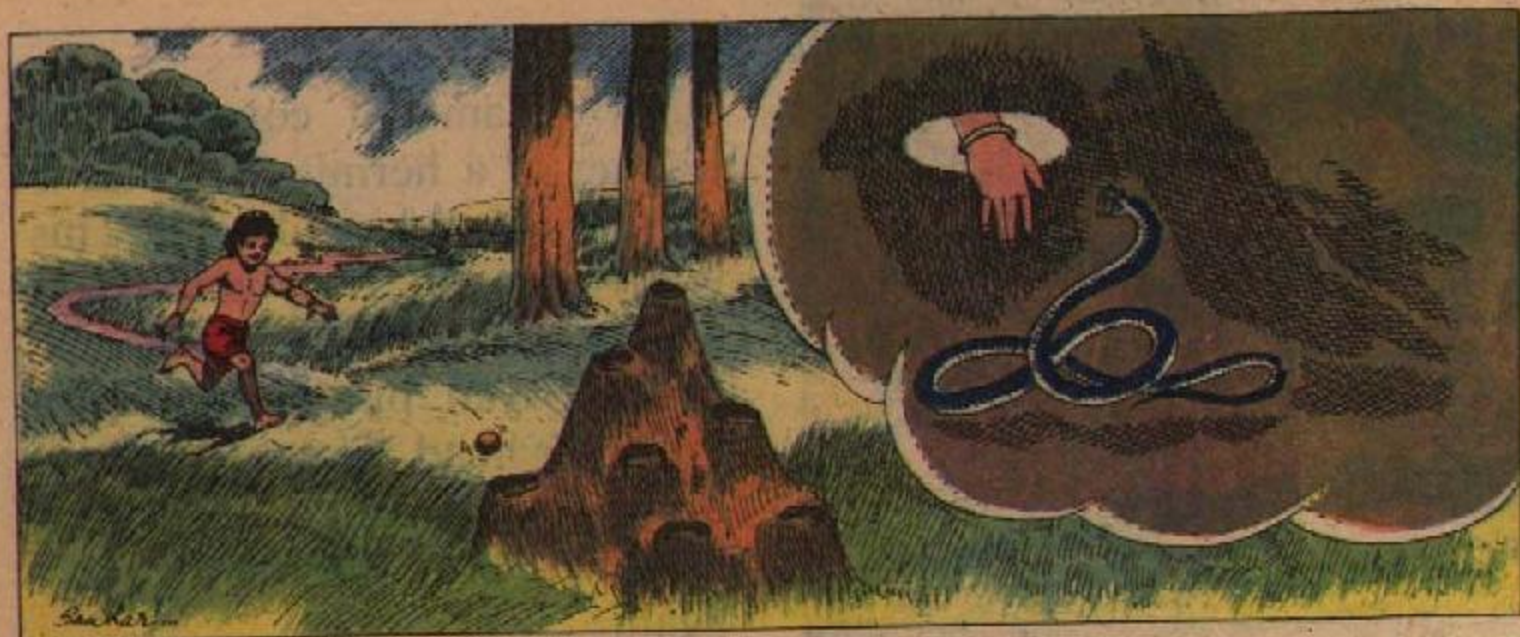
"Your Majesty! I wish to die of old age," the jester replied.

Everybody's face brightened up. "Bravo, witty chap!" the courtiers exclaimed.

The king pardoned the jester. Needless to say by that time his anger had subsided.

—Retold by P. Raja





Legends and Parables of India

THE POWER OF TRUTH

Long ago there was a wealthy young man named Dvaipayana. One day he renounced the world and went away to the Himalayas. He lived the life of an ascetic for years, living under a tree or in a cave. He did not mind the beating sun or torrential rains.

Many years passed. Dvaipayana decided to visit some holy places. First he reached the city of Varanasi where he chanced to meet his childhood friend, Mandavya. At Mandavya's request, he became his guest.

One morning Mandavya's young son was playing with a ball. The ball rolled into a hole. The boy thrust his hand into it, little knowing that there was a serpent inside. He was bitten by

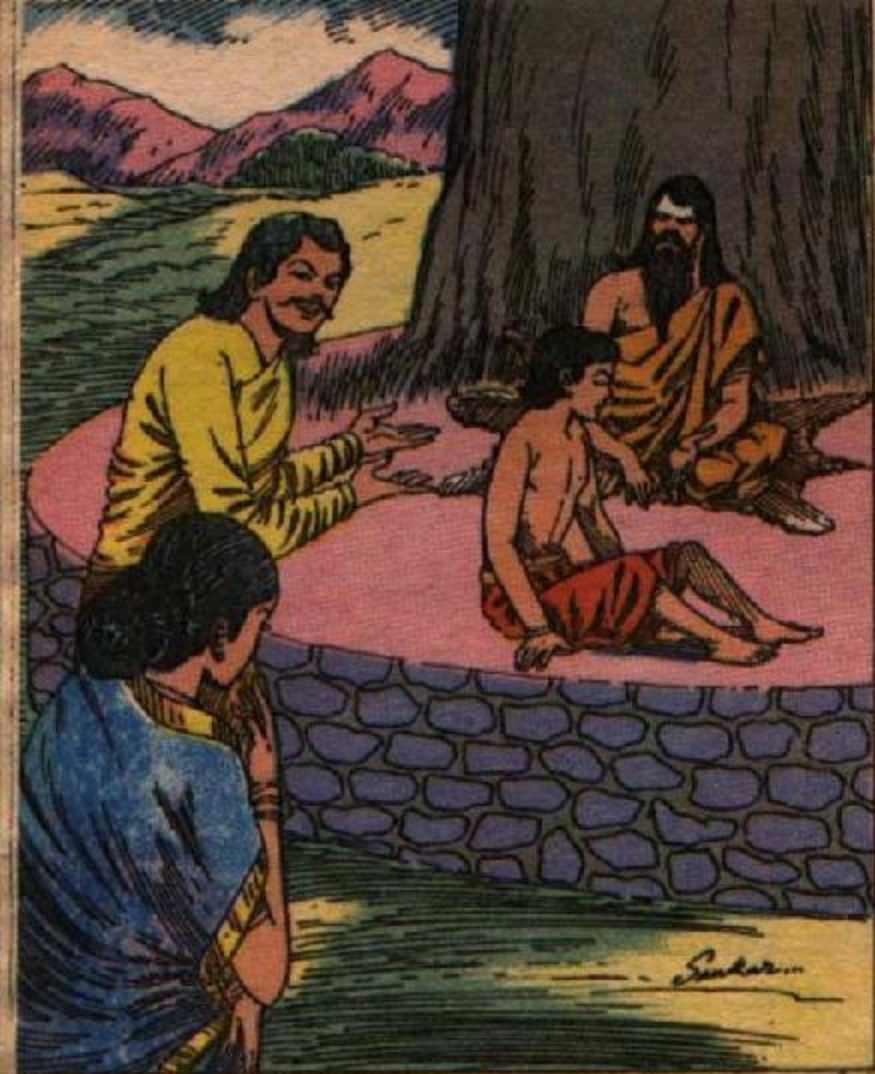
the serpent.

He cried in agony and swooned away. His parents came running to him. When they understood that the boy had been bitten by a serpent, they were horrified.

Dvaipayana sat under a tree a little away from their house, engrossed in meditation. Mandavya and his wife carried their son to him. Laying the boy before him, they said, "Friend, please use your spiritual power and save our child."

Dvaipayana looked pale. "Mandavya," he said, "though I have spent many years in the Himalayas, I have gained no such power by which I can save the boy. Nor do I know any mantra to eradicate the effect of poison. I'm so sorry."





"Don't say so, my friend, don't make me feel helpless. After all, you have devoted so many years to spiritual pursuit. That itself must have earned you some power. Please do whatever you can applying that much power," said Mandavya most anxiously.

"My brother, truth alone and nothing else can save the boy," said Dvaipayana. He then closed his eyes and said, as if addressing Providence, "At the start of my life as an ascetic, I was a sincere seeker after truth. I was meditating and praying regularly. As time passed, my sincerity was gone. I lost interest in my

quest. I am, of course, continuing as a hermit, but that is merely as a course of habit. This is my truth. Let my confession save this boy."

Dvaipayana put his hand on the boy's head. The boy opened his eyes and called out to his mother, but swooned away again.

The boy's parents who had become hopeful for a moment, were plunged in gloom again. "What happened? Why did the child swoon away again?" they asked, almost smiling.

"The truth I spoke had some effect. It reduced the impact of the serpent's poison to some degree. I'm afraid, I can do nothing more. If you speak some truth about yourself, it may be more effective," said Dvaipayana.

"I am known to be hospitable and charitable. Well, I conduct myself in that manner. But I have no zeal for either charity or hospitality. I give alms very reluctantly, only to keep up my reputation. This is the truth about myself. I pray, let my son come out of the crisis," muttered Mandavya, while moving his fingers on his son's body.

The boy sat up and smiled,



but he failed in his effort to walk. He wept.

"Your confession has further improved your son's condition. Let your wife come out with the secret of her mind. That might fully restore the boy to health," Dvaipayan told Mandavya.

"But how can I make any confession in your hearing? I'll speak it alone," said Mandavya's wife.

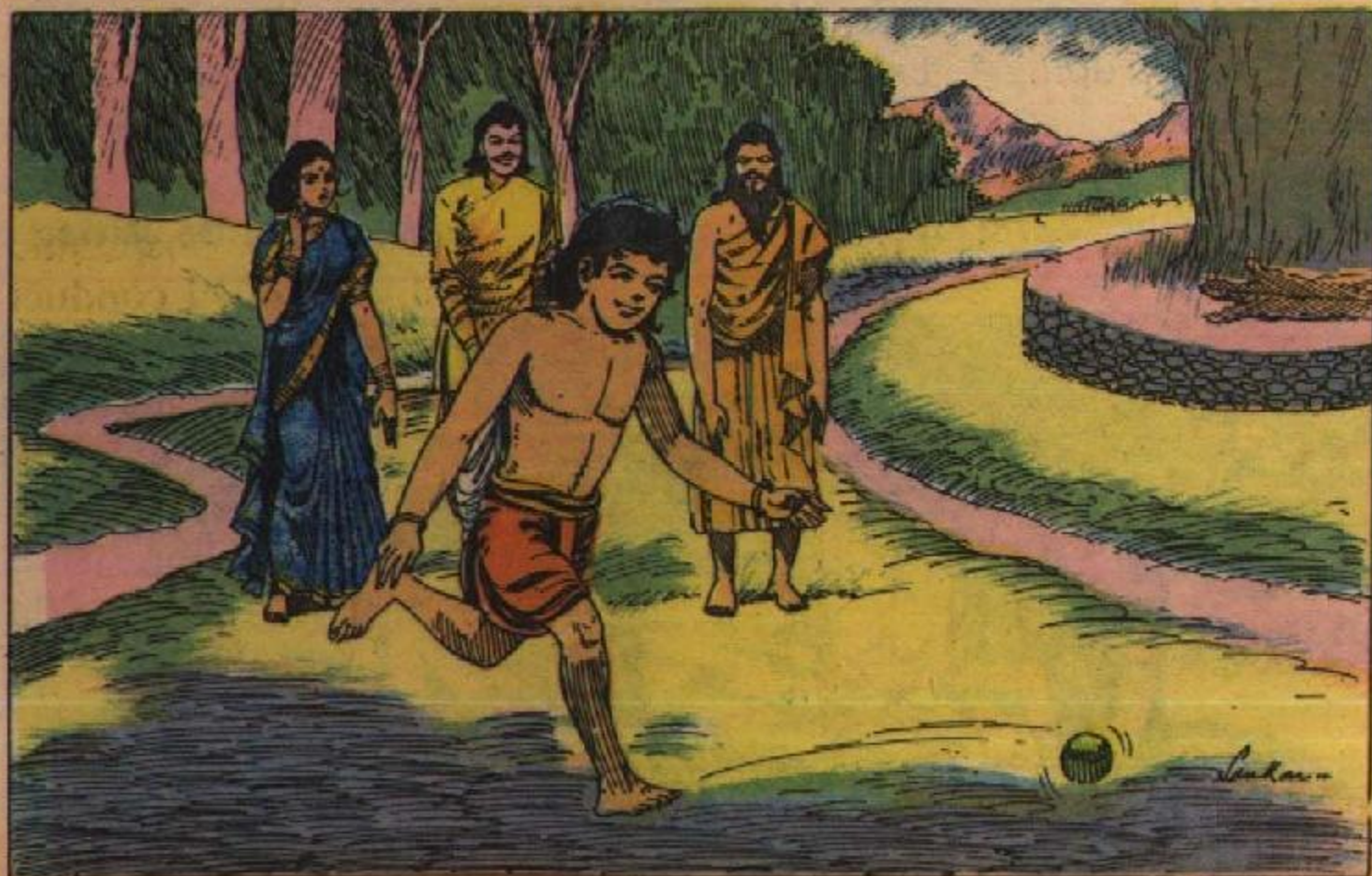
"In that case it will remain a secret; it will not be a confession," reminded Dvaipayan.

Mandavya's wife got over her hesitation. "My son," she said, addressing the boy, "for me the world is like the serpent's hole

into which you put your hand. I always feel as if I am dying with poison. It is because my husband does not care for my problems and sufferings. My parents have forgotten me. That is why I hate everybody in my family, my child excepting. I only pretend to be sweet to all. I have confessed my secret so that you, my child, will become fully well."

The boy stood up and began to run. All rejoiced at it. Dvaipayan blessed the boy.

Next day Dvaipayan got ready to leave for another place of pilgrimage. Mandavya asked him, "My friend, if you have no



interest in leading the life of a hermit, why don't you return to worldly life?"

"It is not easy to do so, my friend! One who returns to worldly life after renouncing it is considered an outcaste by the society. Secondly, once you get accustomed to a way of life, you find it difficult to break away from it. Besides, there is the hope that one day I will grow sincere once again," replied Dvaipayana. Then he asked Mandavya, "Why do you practise hospitality and charity if you do not find any joy in them?"

"My grandfather and father had become famous for these virtues. Lest people should call me miser, I continue to do what they were doing," explained Mandavya.

Mandavya then asked his wife, "If the world appears to

you as bad a place as a serpent's hole, how do you tolerate it?"

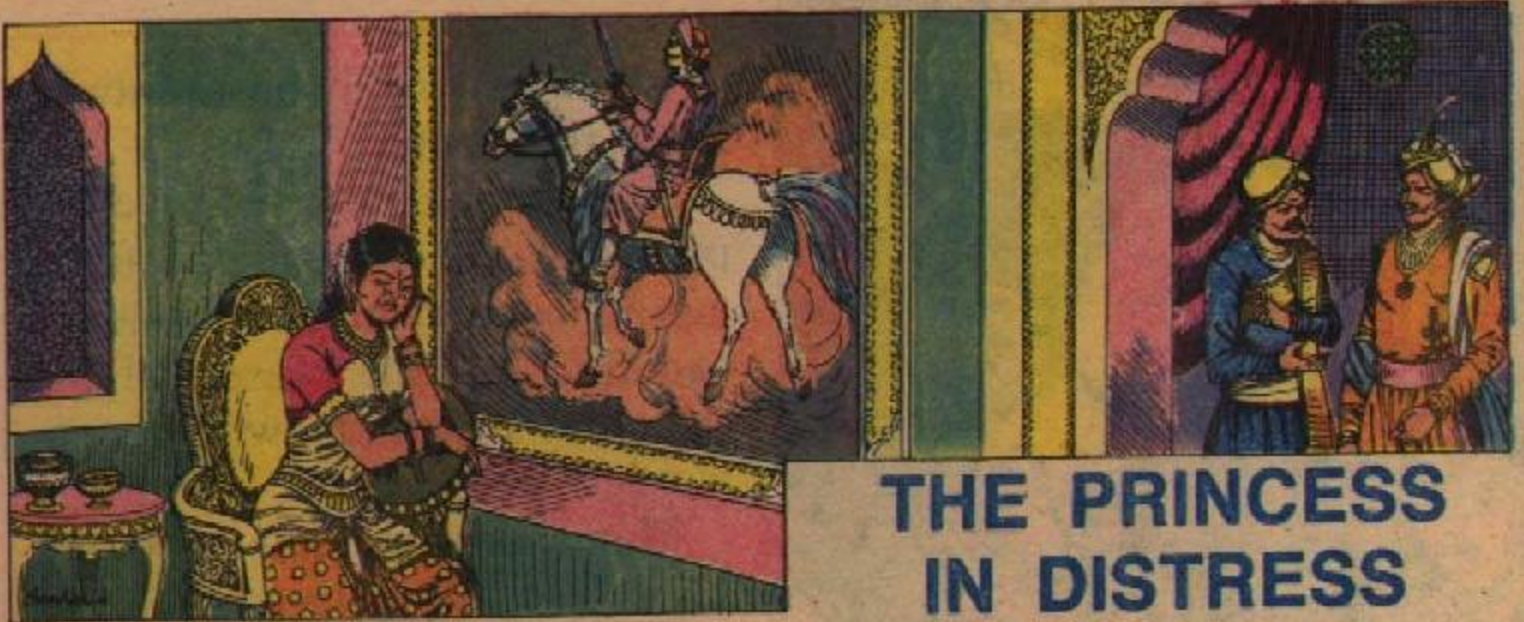
"What else can I do? As a woman I must adjust with any condition, however bad. That is why I never grumble, but suffer silently," said the woman.

"Indeed, I have never paid any attention to your suffering. That was very unwise of me. I will be cautious in the future. I will share all your problems," said Mandavya.

"I'm happy to hear you say so. You should also try to find joy in your hospitality and charity. That will win you piety. Similarly, I should become a devoted hermit, instead of a hermit only by habit. Let there be no difference between our actions and thoughts," said Dvaipayana and he set out for another destination.

(Adapted from the Jatakas)





THE PRINCESS IN DISTRESS

Raja Ajaysingh was a great lover of art. He was very happy when his daughter Rekha showed deep interest in painting. He appointed the best artist as her master.

A few years passed. One day, the master told the king, "Maharaja, I have taught the princess all that I know of painting. Now, she is herself an adept in painting."

The king was very pleased and rewarded the master suitably.

Some months passed. During this period Princess Rekha was seen busy doing a large painting. At last it was over. It was of a valiant prince riding a white stallion. Everyone in the court appreciated it. Raja Ajaysingh was beyond himself with joy.

But, soon after, the princess was seen to be sad and depress-

ed. As days passed she was becoming more and more unhappy and often she was seen crying sitting near her painting. Even her health began to decay.

The king was very worried. He could not see his only daughter suffering. One day, his Minister said, "Maharaja, perhaps the princess has committed an error in the painting and it is because of that that she is so sad."

Princess Rekha's art master was called and asked to judge the painting.

"Maharaja," said the master after looking at the picture very closely, "to the best of my knowledge there is no defect in the painting. It is a masterpiece; it cannot be excelled."

Thus, another day, a playmate of Princess Rekha secretly approached Raja Ajaysingh and





said, "Maharaja, pardon me for saying so, but, I feel that the princess has seen somewhere the prince she has painted and she has fallen in love with him. That is perhaps the cause of her sadness."

The king too had suspected such a possibility. So, he and the queen approached the princess and said, "Dear Rekha, tell us if you have fallen in love with the prince you have painted. We will request him to come to our kingdom and we shall gladly arrange your marriage with him."

"Father," said a sobbing princess, "I did not think that your understanding of my feelings is

so shallow." And she ran away from the room.

Not knowing how to solve the problem, the king got a public announcement made: Whoever can find out the reason of his daughter's sadness will be rewarded in gold.

Many doctors and wisemen tried. But, all of them failed to get to the root cause of Princess Rekha's sadness.

One morning, a handsome man, named Chitrassen, came to the king and said, "Maharaja, please give me the opportunity to see once the famous painting done by the Princess and maybe I shall be able to find out the cause of her depression."

So many had said the same thing! The king, rather irritated, said, "Young man, every one has seen the painting and appreciated it. But, I want the cure for my daughter's condition. How much do you know of art of medicine?"

"Maharaja," replied Chitrassen, "I am young but I am myself a master of art, dance and music. I have worked several years in King Surendra's court."

Ultimately, the young artiste was allowed to see the painting

After seeing it, Chitrasen said, "Maharaja, the painting is extraordinary and it cannot be bettered. Now I know the cause of the princess's sadness."

"What is it?" asked the king.

"Maharaja, I shall reveal it when the time comes—pardon me for saying so. But now, the cure is important. Please appoint for the princess a master who can teach her both dance and music and you'll see the difference in a month or two."

Chitrasen spoke so confidently that the king was impressed by him and he appointed the artiste as the master for his daughter.

Two months passed.

One day the king and the minister visited Chitrasen in the hall of Arts. He was overjoyed to see his daughter smiling

and happy.

"Chitrasen, now at least tell us the secret of your success—what was the cause of my daughter's sadness?" asked the king.

"Maharaja, Princess Rekha had achieved everything she could in painting. After completing her masterpiece she felt that she had nothing more to achieve. Such a thing makes an artiste very depressed. That is why I wanted her to learn dancing and singing so that she could become aware of other horizons of perfection which she could reach. Now that she has realized this truth, she is happy and her normal self," explained Chitrasen.

Raja Ajaysingh was very pleased with Chitrasen's depth of knowledge and he appointed him as his advisor.



BIRD WITH BUILT-IN BINOCULARS

The vulture is renowned for its needle-sharp long-distance vision.

IF you could stand on a craggy mountain and look at the valleys through a pair of binoculars, you could be having a vulture's-eye view of the world. No bird—or human—has better eyes than the vulture, which has its own built-in pair of binoculars.

It can see objects a long way off very clearly because there are two focussing points in each eye. One focussing point is used for seeing things at close quarters. But for things that are in the distance, the vulture brings its second focussing point into play—like a man looking through a telescope or a pair of binoculars.

Such keen eyes are needed by the vultures, which, with the hawks and the harriers, belong to a varied group of flesh-eaters. Each has a strongly hooked bill, and its nostrils are in soft, leathery skin called a cere. Its strong feet end in three toes directed forward and one backward, each with a long, sharp nail.

Strong and large wings enable vultures to fly swiftly in pursuit of their prey. Some types swoop to the ground or water from a hovering position or even while in full flight.

However, it is rare for vultures to kill animals or birds. The lammergeier, or bearded vulture, may occasionally kill some of the smaller animals. But vultures as a whole eat dead flesh.

The death of a wild animal in Asia, Africa or a warm part of Europe is the signal for flocks of vultures to swoop down from the sky and feast upon the carcass until the bones have been picked clean.

One bird may have spotted the dead animal first. Its swift descent from the skies will have been seen by others which speedily join in its enjoyment of the meal.

The vulture's liking for dead bodies is useful because it removes matter that would otherwise rot. This would attract flies and spread diseases.

Vultures are large birds up to a metre long. There are no feathers on their heads or necks, where the skin is often coloured.

Soaring Flight

There are many kinds of vultures, and typical of them is the black vulture which lives in the Mediterranean area and extends eastwards to India and China. It generally nests in trees, where it builds a bulky nest of boughs lined with twigs. In this is laid a single large egg, richly marked with red.

Its cousin, which ranges over the whole of Africa, except the forest districts of the west coast and the interior, and parts of Europe and Asia, is the griffon vulture. It lives in open and rocky districts.

To see this bird fly is exciting. It becomes airborne with only a few strokes and is able to travel effortlessly by soaring.

When landing, the bird drops its legs some distance from the rock and, sailing to within a few metres, it slows itself down with two or three heavy strokes of the wings.

Griffon vultures usually nest on rocks, and, in the south of Europe, probably lay their eggs in February, as young ones are usually found in most nests early in April.

During incubation, one bird sits constantly, and if frightened off returns immediately once the danger has passed.

The nest is a big structure made of sticks, and it is common to find from two to six nests placed near together.

Gifted with the power of undergoing long fasts, the griffon, when it can obtain sufficient food, is a perfect glutton.

One of these birds, which was too gorged to



stand, was seen continuing its feast while lying on its side.

In America there are birds of a different family generally known as condors. They extend from Canada to Cape Horn, and they can catch their prey alive.

Among them is the largest flying bird—Andean condor of South America, which sometimes has a wing span of three metres. A remarkable feature about the condor is its ability to hover without flapping its wings, it being supported by currents of rising warm air.

Climbers, suddenly coming to the brow of a

precipice, are treated to a fine spectacle when 20 or 30 of these birds start heavily from their resting place and wheel away in majestic circles.

Before the motorcar era, turkey vultures could be seen walking in the streets of the southern United States. They roosted in the housetops, completely ignored by passers-by.

They look their best when aloft, floating in ever-changing circles without any apparent movement of their wings. But their airborne beauty soon disappears when they land and become the scavengers of the animal kingdom.



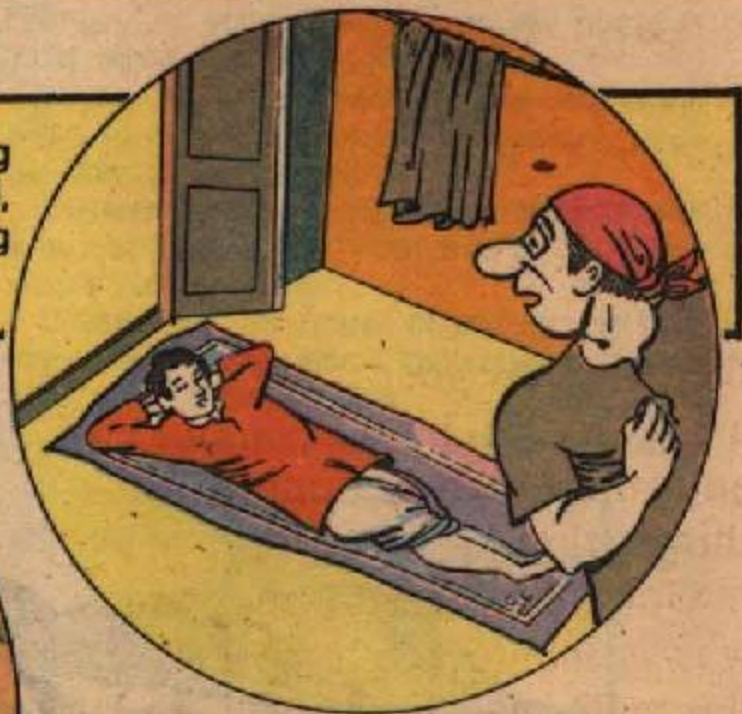
NEXT - A BLANKET

A burglar entered a hut. He spread a bed-sheet on the floor so that he could put his booty on it and pack off.



The owner of the hut, a strong young man, quietly left his bed and came to lie down on the bed-sheet.

The burglar found nothing worth stealing in the hut. Ready to leave empty-handed, he was in a fix to find the young man lying on his bed-sheet.



The burglar thought it wise to tiptoe out of the hut. "Leave the door open," said the young man from behind. "Some one may bring me a blanket in the same manner you brought this bed-sheet!"



POT FULL OF SALT

Shivshankar had one son and one daughter. Soon after his studies, the son got married to a girl from a neighbouring village.

Until the marriage, there were only two ladies at home - Shivshankar's wife and the daughter - and there was harmony between the two. They had similar habits and similar ways of thinking. But, with the coming of the daughter-in-law, the harmony got disturbed. New habits had to be accommodated and there were always some things that went wrong.

One day, the mother-in-law was going to fetch water from the well. As she went out, she told the daughter-in-law, "Look Rukmini, I've kept a pot of dal on the stove. After some time put two spoonfuls of salt in it. Don't you forget to do it," and, saying so, she went out.

After sweeping the floor, the daughter-in-law put, as was ordered by her mother-in-law, two spoonfuls of salt in the dal. After mixing it well, she left it to boil further.

After a little while, the daughter of the house entered the kitchen. Seeing the dal boiling she thought, "My sister-in-law is very forgetful. I am sure this time also she has forgotten to put salt in the dal. Now that uncle is here on a visit, I better not take any chances; otherwise he will find it tasteless." And she added a quantity of salt.

A little while later, the mother fetched water and straight went to the kitchen. Seeing the dal on the stove, she told herself, "Oh, this Rukmini! She doesn't do a single thing that I tell her to. I cannot depend on her any more." And



she added two more spoonfuls of salt.

When the lunch was served, the uncle shouted, "Eh! there is no salt in the dal! Have, you forgotten to put it?"

"No, brother, I assure you, I have myself put salt in the dal," said Shivshankar's wife.

"Mother," cried the daughter from the next room, "I have put some salt in the dal thinking that my sister-in-law has as usual forgotten to put it!"

"Mother," joined the daughter-in-law, "you had asked me to put salt in the dal. How can I do otherwise, though you always find fault with me?"

Shivshankar felt very embarrassed. "I am ashamed to see such lack of faith among one another in the house. Henceforth each one will do her own work and not expect the others to do it for her."

All stood, their heads hung.

Once a reader told Mark Twain, "Sir, I'll be happy to pay ten pounds not to have read your *Huckleberry Finn*." This was an unexpected comment. Mark Twain, looking sad, was going to ask, "Was it that bad?" But, before that the reader explained, "So that I could have again the great pleasure of reading it for the first time!"





New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire

THE MAGIC NECKLACE

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of ghosts. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed him observed, "O King, what is your purpose in taking such pains? Are you sure that you'll make use of the reward that might come to you at the end of your labour? I'm putting this question to you because there are instances of men throwing away the boons that come to them. Let me narrate a story to you to prove my point. Pay attention to

it. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: This happened when the kingdom of Kuntal was ruled by King Shantashael. He loved his people very much. Also, he was an able ruler who dealt severely with dishonest or corrupt officials. At the same time he bestowed handsome rewards on honest and hard-working officials.

There was no fear of bandits or hoodlums in his kingdom. But natural calamities like cyclones and floods often harassed the people. Whenever any such calamity struck an area, the king

himself rushed there and participated in the relief work. Sometimes he even jumped into the flood waters and rescued drowning people.

Once the northern region of the kingdom was lashed by a terrible cyclone. It was followed by flood. The king camped in a room adjacent to a temple. He supervised the rescue and relief operations with a keen eye. His officers were working tirelessly. However, he had the feeling that the operations could be much more prompt and smooth if the officers worked more sincerely.



After a few days the king started for his capital. The main road had been disrupted by the flood. He had to take to a round about way that passed through a forest.

In that forest lived a yogi. He could perform miracles. The king respected him, though he had never met him.

The king took this opportunity to pay a visit to the yogi's hermitage. The yogi was very happy. He said, "O King, I know all about your hard work for the people. I am extremely pleased with you. I wish I could be of some help to you."

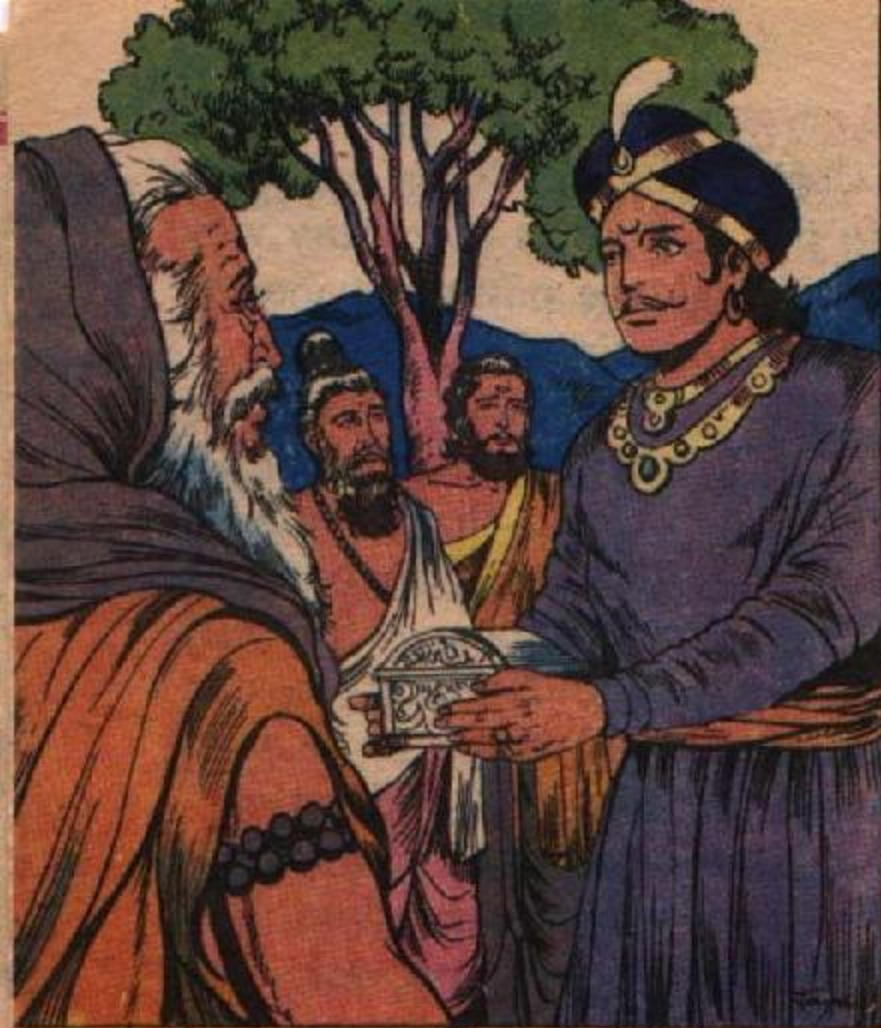
"Noble Soul, I've a question to put to you. Is there any way to change the nature of men?" asked the king.

The yogi smiled. "My dear King, it is not within the capacity of anyone to change human nature. However, if anyone sincerely desires to change himself, he can change. Nobody else can do that. God helps those who want to change for the better."

The king nodded approvingly. The yogi then asked, "O King, why did you ask this question?"

"Holy One, when I observe my officers in action, I get the





feeling that they were not quite sincere in their work. I wish they worked harder and with love for the suffering people," said the King.

The yogi kept quiet for a moment. "O King," he then asked, "Can you wait here for day?"

"Why not! It is a privilege for me to be in your company." The king perched his tent in the forest.

The yogi sat in meditation for the whole night. In the morning he gave a fine casket to the king and said, "O King, this contains a magic necklace. If you put this on and instruct your officers to

do something, they will work with great zeal. One man's work will equal the work of two. This necklace will remain effective for atleast five years. Its power will vanish when I leave my body."

The king stood silent for a long time. Then he lifted his head and said, "Noble Soul, please excuse me. I should not have anything like this."

The yogi did not take offence at the king's refusal to accept the necklace. He smiled and said, "I bless you, my son! Let your officers be lucky enough to feel inspired by you."

The king bowed to the yogi and left for his capital.

The vampire paused for a while and then said in a challenging tone, "O King, I cannot understand whether King Shantashael was foolish or a non-believer in supernatural powers. Why should he refuse to receive an object of rare worth offered by the yogi? What do you think of it? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

King Vikram answered forthwith: "King Shantashael proved



himself wise and the yogi realised that. From the dialogue between the king and the yogi it was quite clear that the necklace could not have changed human nature. It could have given a special impetus to the officers for a few years. But what after that? They would have got accustomed to work only under the artificial zeal given by the necklace. Their natural zeal would have died. Once the power of the necklace would have come to an end, they would

have become worse than what they were. That is why the king declined to receive the necklace. The yogi appreciated his decision. He said that let the officers be inspired by the king's example. The king worked out of his sincere love for his people. The best thing for the officers would be to look upon him as their model!"

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

"Every morning when I get out of bed, I have two choices: to be happy or to be unhappy. I always choose to be happy," said a 102-year-old man when interviewed by the radio.



TWO SISTERS

The king of Golconda had two daughters, Prabha and Reenamba. They looked like twins, Prabha being a year older than Reenamba. But, their natures differed very much, as much as the hot summer day and the cool evenings of springs.

Prabha was a haughty girl. She was very proud that she was a princess and she behaved with all accordingly. She ordered about everyone in the palace and showed her temper at the slightest provocation. Above all, she was extremely jealous of Reenamba.

Reenamba was docile and sweet-tempered. She was friendly towards all and every one loved her, except, of course, Prabha.

One day, Reenamba told Prabha, "Sister, why do you have to pick up quarrels with me

on any pretext? Can't we be friends? The whole country would then respect us much more!"

"I do not care about the whole country," replied Prabha. "First, you start respecting me and obey me in everything I tell you."

Of course, it was not possible for such a thing to happen: Reenamba could not surrender to proud Prabha.

It so happened that one day a sculptor came to the king of Golconda and offered to make sculptures for the king. After testing his talents, the king appointed him as the chief sculptor of the court.

The sculptor, Vedan, quietly worked in the king's garden, making beautiful statues. Prabha and Reenamba liked his work and visited him everyday.

Whenever they put any question to him, Vedan replied to them in a pleasant manner, but without any show of reverence.

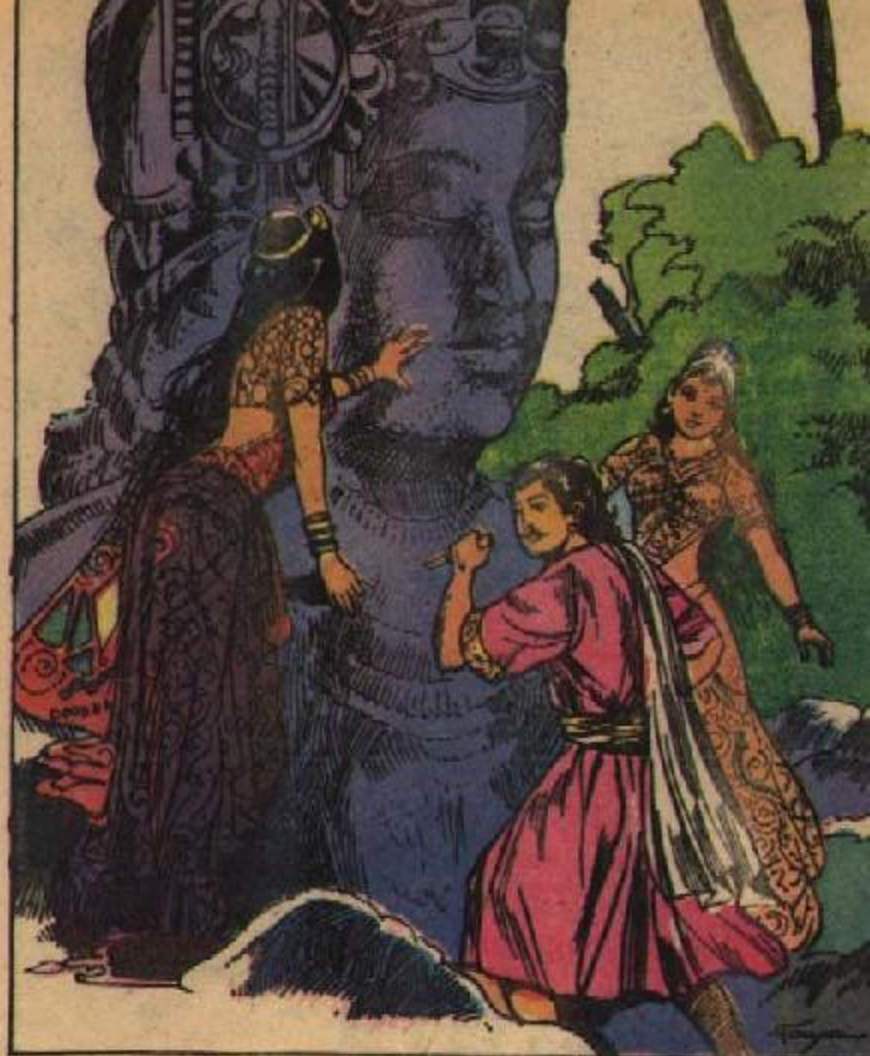
"Why do you speak to me as if I was a commoner?" asked Prabha one day. "Are you not just a paid artiste of the king and must you not behave like one when speaking to a princess?" Prabha demanded.

"Other people may be afraid of you, but, I see only your beauty which is more important to me as an artiste. And, your anger only enhances your beauty and I love you for that," replied Vedan, fearlessly.

"How dare you speak to me like that?" said Prabha angrily. "Wait till I get you punished!"

However, in the heart of heart, she felt happy about Vedan. He was the only one to declare his love to her and not to her sister Reenamba. And, slowly, she started visiting the artiste all alone, not telling Reenamba anything about it. However, she always maintained her stance of a proud princess.

One day, Reenamba visited the town of her uncle. She was surprised to see that the people there were suffering without wa-



ter. There had been no rains since two years and all the lakes and wells had almost dried up. Reenamba felt very sad at heart and sincerely prayed to God Varuna, for his grace.

All of a sudden, something happened to Reenamba. By a special capacity that opened up in her overnight, she could see clearly any hidden wealth and the water sources under the earth. After an initial doubting, the people of the kingdom came to believe Reenamba and they dug wells on the spots pointed out by her and found plenty of water. Similarly, they found buried wealth too! Soon, the



people of the town came to believe that Reenamba was an incarnation of a goddess. They wanted to have her statue installed in their town. Some of them approached the king and told him all about Reenamba.

The king asked Vedan to make a statue of his younger daughter. Needless to say, Prabha's jealousy and anger increased two fold. She called up a few hoodlums and ruffians and intructed them that once the statue of Reenamba was installed, they should create confusion and chaos in the kingdom.

Prabha succeeded in her plan. Soon after the statue of

Reenamba was unveiled, there were hooliganism and plundering in the kingdom. Word spread that all this was due to the inauspicious statue of Reenamba.

The king was surprised to hear the complaints. He summoned Vedan's guru and said, "O Master, I thought that Vedan was your best disciple and that whatever he does will only bring good luck to my kingdom. But, unfortunately, his statue of Reenamba has only been an ill-omen. I know very well my daughter, Reenamba—her sweet, humble and devoted nature can never do any harm to my people. It is your disciple that has brought about all this!"

The great sculptor replied, "O King, I can assure you that Vedan is a master artiste. However, let me see the statue once."

So, the king, the guru and Vedan—all the three went to see the statue. On seeing it, the guru said, "As a piece of art, it is almost perfect. And yet, there is a bad vibration around it and that only Vedan will be able to explain."

Vedan came forward and explained, "Gurudev, the statue is



actually not of Reenamba but of Prabha, whom I love in spite of her ill temper and jealousy towards Reenamba. Their physical resemblance is so close that I thought no one will ever notice it. However, I cannot hide the truth from you. Pardon me, Gurudev."

Prabha realised that her ill temper and jealousy had wrecked the life of the people of a whole town. If she does not stop and change herself, then the whole kingdom may be ruined.

So, she begged pardon of Reenamba and promised that henceforth she would change herself for the better.

The king too felt happy about the change. As Vedan loved her truly and deeply, he gave Prabha in marriage to him.

After the marriage, Prabha requested Vedan to make a beautiful statue of Reenamba which she herself got installed in the most beautiful spot of the kingdom.



"It is not how old you are that matters, but how you have grown old—whether through pride and stupidity or through alertness and humility," says an old sage.





TWO LOVERS OF ART

Vijay himself was not an artiste but he was a lover of art. He used to invite artistes, receive them with due honour and arrange for their performances. Whatever money he used to get from those programmes, he shared it between the artiste and himself. Thus, he soon became a rich man.

One day, Vijay took a musician to Annapura and arranged for his demonstration there. The people of Annapura were overjoyed to hear the musician. Out of the audience a gentleman, richly dressed, came to the stage and invited both Vijay and the musician to his house.

Vijay was surprised to see the great honour and care showered upon them. While parting, Prakash, the rich man, gave beautiful gifts to the artiste.

Vijay was very much impress-

ed by Prakash's devotion to art and artistes. He decided to take every artiste, that he would invite, to Annapura, and, to Prakash's house.

Some months passed and with each passing month Vijay's admiration for Prakash increased. He thought that everyone in the town should come to know about Prakash and his love of art. So, one day, he went to the eminent persons of the town and talked to them about Prakash.

Vijay was shocked to hear their comments; "Prakash is a selfish man; we do not want to hear about him," said one of the doctors. "Oh! Prakash! He is such an egotist that we can't even speak to him," said the headmaster of the town's biggest school.

It is a common thing that



people often become jealous of any talented person. So must be the case with Prakash thought Vijay. And, he continued to admire Prakash.

One day, however, he asked Prakash, "Being a great lover of art, have you not yourself learnt any art?"

"Who said that I do not know any art? Come with me and I'll show you my works of art," replied Prakash.

Vijay was pleasantly surprised to see in the gallery paintings and sculptures. Although they were not so artistic, they bore evidence of talent.

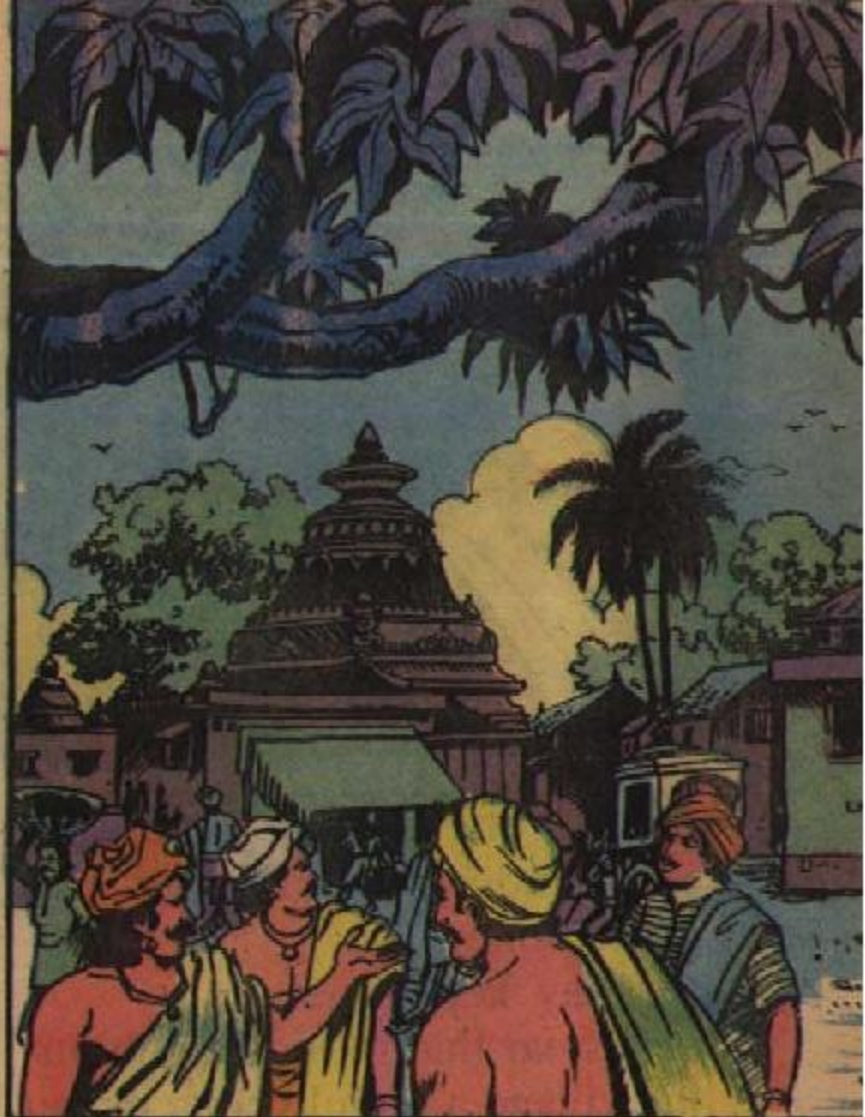
"Have you done all these?" asked Vijay when he recovered from his surprise.

"Yes, Vijay," replied Prakash. "By my twenty-fifth year I mastered all the sixtyfour arts."

"You are a real genius. Prakash. How is it that you have not yet exhibited your art or given any performances?" asked Vijay.

"I do not want to exhibit my talents in front of ordinary people," said Prakash.

"Then, I'll arrange for you an audience with the king himself. He'll receive you with due honour" said Vijay, with great en-

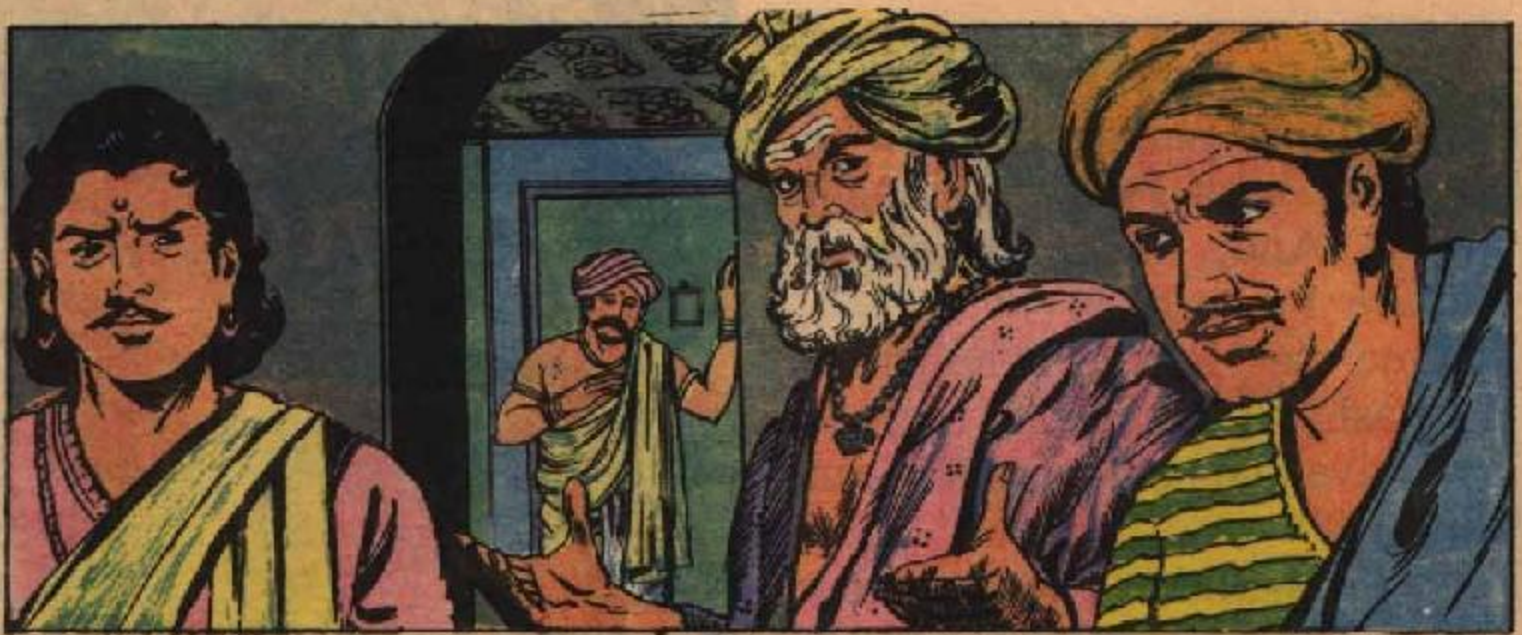


thusiasm.

"Vijay, no man is yet born who can understand my knowledge of art. Nor is there any one fit enough to honour me. That is why I cannot accept your invitation" said Prakash proudly. "All, all, are fools!" he added.

Vijay was stunned to hear this from Prakash. "When you invited artistes and paid them your respects, did anyone question your ability to do so? Hence, it is not right for you to question others' right to honour you!" said Vijay in a serious tone.

"I am fit to honour any one,



but, no one is fit to pay me my due honour," said Prakash in a grave tone.

Vijay kept quiet.

"I hear that in the neighbouring village a grand veena player has come to give a performance," continued Prakash. "I am going there to invite him. If you want, you can come with me."

When they approached the veena player, Prakash said, "Friend, you'll be pleased to know that I've decided to bestow a title and gifts to you!"

"What! Are you not Prakash the money-lender?" said the old veena player, with scorn. "How much do you know about

Veena? Who are you to honour me and my art?" the old player questioned Prakash.

Prakash fell silent and he walked away from the house. Vijay followed him. A little later Vijay followed him. A little later he said, "Prakash, I do not know if I am fortunate or unfortunate to have met today another person like you. But, I've realised that in spite of your great talents, what comes in your way of being accepted by people and by artistes is your tremendous pride. A true artiste is always humble and egoless - but, you are not so."

After this episode, Vijay never met Prakash again.

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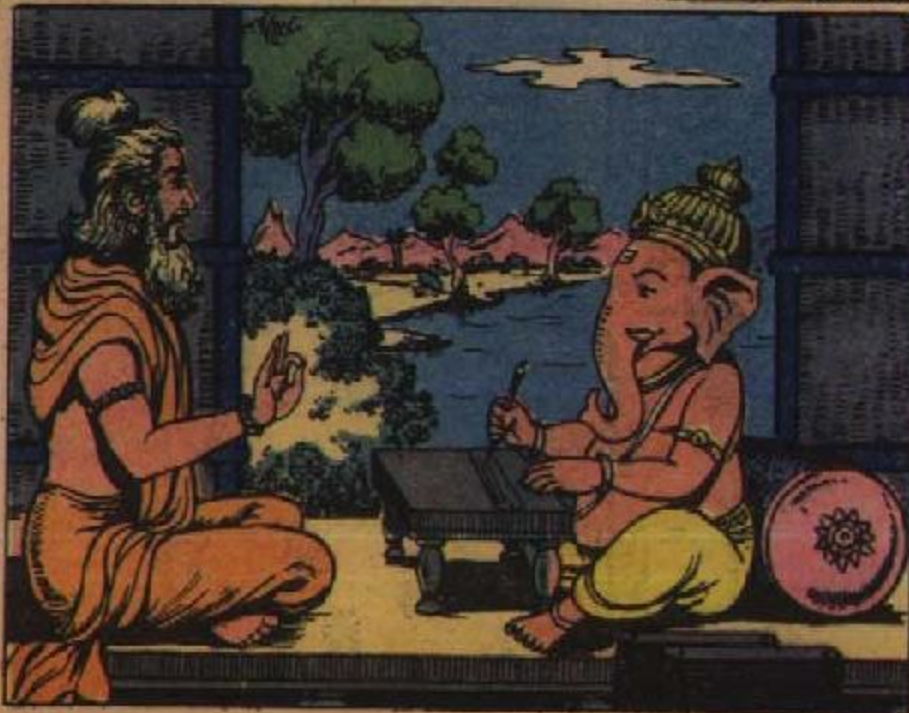


Temples of India

Badrinath and Kedarnath

Since times immemorial, the hills of Himalaya have been considered most sacred by Indians. The great poet, Kalidasa, describes the Himalaya as "God-souled". Gods, gundharvas and nymphs are believed to dwell in that sphere. Many of our great rivers come from the Himalayas.

It is only natural that seekers will turn to the Himalayas for peace and for their meditation. Innumerable sages have lived in the Himalayas through the ages. There are many holy spots in the hills.



Among the most ancient of holy places in the Himalayas is Badrinath. It is here that the Sage Vyasa dictated his Mahabharata to Lord Ganesha. It is one of the seats of Lord Vishnu.



Long long ago a temple had been built to Vishnu at Badrinath. But a terrible landslide seems to have destroyed it. The deity got submerged in the river Alakananda. Ages passed. Few people visited the place.

The young Sankaracharya, during his travel across India, visited the place. Through meditation he knew where the deity rested. He recovered the idol and installed it in a newly built temple. He also arranged for the deity's regular worship.



Arrangements made by Sankaracharya remain in force to this day. Badrinath, once beyond the reach of men who were not prepared to take an arduous journey, is accessible today by automobiles

The temple remains closed for about six months of the year as snowfall makes it impossible for priests to remain there or pilgrims to visit the place. But the worship does not stop. It is offered to a representative idol of the deity at Joshimath.



Before the temple is closed, the priest lights a lamp in front of the deity. When the temple is reopened with the setting in of the summer, the lamp is found to be burning. This has been a very old custom—highly valued.

On an elevation of 11,735 feet above the sea level stands the temple of Kedarnath, one of the great seats of Lord Siva, a difficult but highly prized place of pilgrimage for devotees for centuries.





The five Pandava brothers and Draupadi had undertaken their final journey for heaven through this route. Draupadi died on the way first. Near Kedarnath died Sahadeva, the youngest of the brothers, unable to bear the strain of the journey any longer.

Yudhisthira felt the presence of Lord Siva in this region, known as the Rudra Himalayas, and offered worship to Him. Thus began the tradition of worshipping Lord Siva at Kedarnath. It has remained in vogue ever since.



Pilgrims brave the difficulties of trekking and visit Kedarnath with devotion and in a spirit of adventure. Like Badrinath, the shrine of Kedarnath remains closed for about six months of the year. During that period, the deity's representative idol is worshipped at Ukhimath.

AKUPARA

A strange man appeared in the forest. It seems he had spent ages in trance somewhere and had forgotten who he was. The stranger, was a stranger even to himself!

He met an old sage and asked him if he knew him. "No," said the sage. "I don't remember having seen you ever."

"Is there anybody in the forest older than you?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, an owl who lives in the hill," said the sage and he accompanied the stranger out of curiosity.

The owl surveyed the stranger but said that he had never known him. "Go to the lake known as Indradyumna. There lies an old stork who might have known you."

Following the owl's advice the stranger and the sage reached Lake Indradyumna and met the stork, but he could not solve the problem. However, he suggested that they put the question to the tortoise named Akupara, the oldest resident of the lake.

The moment Akupara saw the stranger, he wept. "O noble soul, how can I forget you? You are Indradyumna, the mighty king who had built so many temples and monuments. This lake is founded by you and even it bears your name!" the tortoise said.

The king now remembered his life. A chariot descended from heaven and the pious king departed to the celestial sphere, taking leave of the sage, the owl, the stork and the tortoise.





BOON OUT OF A CURSE

Sukhvir was so terrified that he almost threw off the empty basket! He saw to his surprise that there was nothing in the basket. And yet, it had seemed so very heavy, unbearably heavy! Such a thing had never happened to him all these years.

He used to go through that forest almost every evening. Every day he would start early in the morning from his house, with a basketful of fruits on his head. He would go to the neighbouring market, sell off all the fruit by the evening and return home taking the path through the forest.

On that day, as he was walking through the forest, with his empty basket on his head, he felt suddenly a heavy weight on his head. At first Sukhvir thought it to be just his imagination. But, as the weight started

increasing and became unbearable, he flung the basket on the floor, with a shiver running down his spine.

A beautiful female form emerged from the basket. "I am the nymph of the forest. Do not be afraid, I mean no harm to you," said the nymph with a gentle smile.

Sukhvir felt comforted. "O nymph of the forest, I'm indeed grateful to you for..."

"Sukhvir, in fact, I'm grateful to you. For long I'd a desire to be carried by a man and that desire is fulfilled today. You ask for a boon and I shall grant it as a mark of my gratitude to you," said the nymph.

"If that is so, then, fill up my baskets with sweet mangoes," asked Sukhvir, half in doubt.

"It will be filled up with extraordinary mangoes as soon as



you enter your village,” said the nymph and disappeared into the darkening forest.

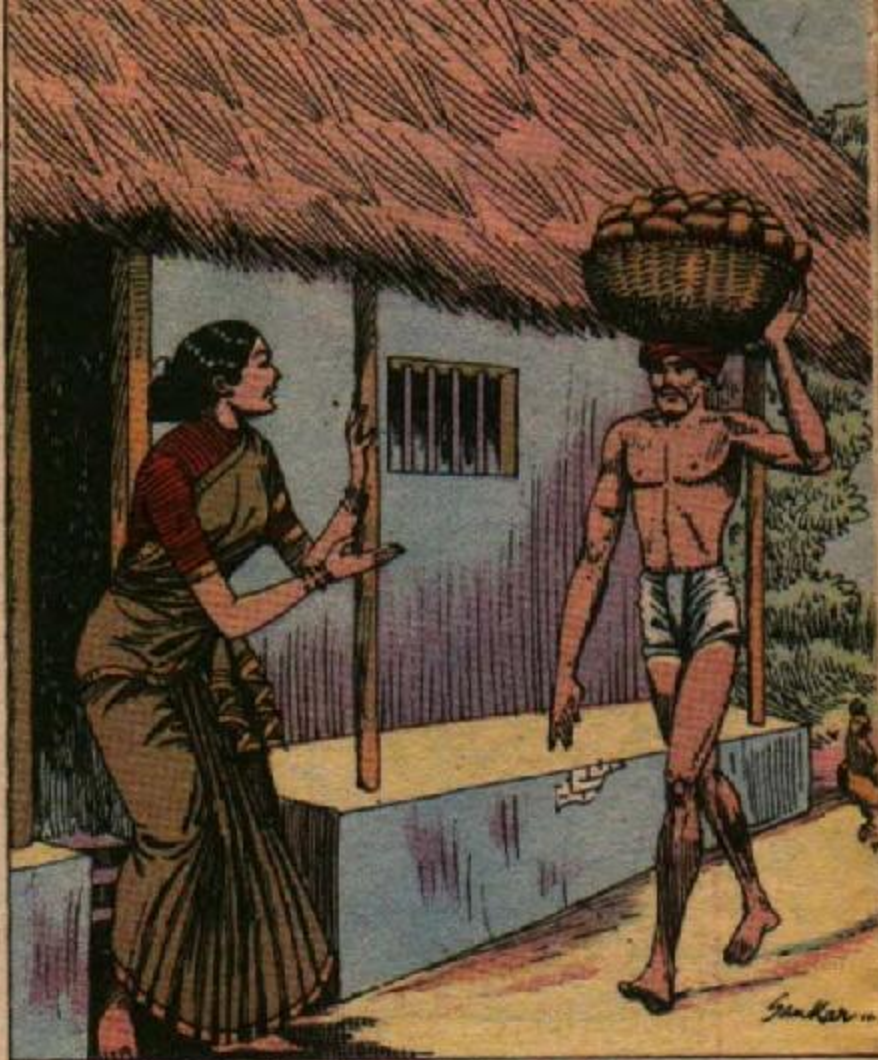
Sukhvir's doubts turned into happiness when his basket got filled with big, golden mangoes. As he approached his hut, his wife was surprised to see the basket still full of mangoes.

“What has happened? Could you not sell any mangoes to-day?” enquired his wife Anusuya.

Sukhvir took her inside the house and narrated to her his experience in the forest. She laughed at his foolishness and said, “What a simpleton you are! You asked the nymph only for mangoes? You should have asked her for some gold, so that we could live securely and comfortably for the rest of our days!”

Sukhvir realised his stupidity and felt a bit annoyed with himself.

However, next day he took the golden mangoes to the market. At first no one was ready to purchase them. After a while, a rich man was attracted by the beautiful mangoes and he purchased a dozen of them. Then other people also realised the value of the golden mangoes



and very soon the basket got empty.

That evening Anusuya was very happy.

Next morning, Sukhvir went to the market with his usual, ordinary mangoes and sat under the very tree where he had squatted the previous day. People flocked to him, but they got disappointed seeing the ordinary type of mangoes. No one was ready to purchase them, they all wanted the special goldens ones.

So, that evening, Sukhvir returned to the forest, came to the same spot where he had seen the nymph and called out.



“O nymph of the forest, please reappear before me. Your boon has turned into a curse. I’m doomed!!”

The nymph became visible and gave a patient hearing to Sukhviri’s sad story.

“All right. Ask for another boon,” said the nymph sympathising with Sukhviri.

“Grant me some gold,” said Sukhviri, “and listen, I want it right away—not when I approach my village.” Sukhviri wanted to be sure of his boon.

“Let it be so, but be very careful with it,” said the kind nymph and she vanished into the thick forest.

Next morning, Sukhviri saw a lump of gold in his basket all bright and glittering! He put the basket on his head and started walking quickly towards his home, thinking how happy would be Anusuya with the gold boon.

But, it was not to be so.

Just around a bend stood a wayside robber, face to face with him. The robber thought that the basket on Sukhviri’s head was full of mangoes, and he demanded, pointing a knife at him.

“Give me the basket and I’ll not harm you!”

Sukhviri tried to save his gold by acting brave:

“I’ll not give it at any cost,” he said.

The robber got more suspicious. He thought, “Why is this man risking his life for the sake of a basketful of fruit? Surely, there must be something precious in the basket!”

The robber pounced on Sukhviri wounding him in the arm. Sukhviri got scared and ran for his life, leaving behind the basket and the gold in it.

When he entered his village suppressing his tears, he saw a big crowd near the temple. Cu-





rious, he went near it. He saw a messenger from the king announcing to the public:

"We have received information that Gajendra, the cruel and notorious bandit is hiding in this area. Whoever can bring him to the king, dead or alive, will be rewarded with a lakh of rupees!"

Sukhvir realised that once again he had missed a good chance of becoming rich. If he had come to know about the announcement just a day before, he would have surely tricked the bandit in the forest, who was sure to have been Gajendra, and, somehow captured

him. Alas!

Next day, he went to the forest once again, called out to the nymph and narrated to her his misfortune and said, "Nymph, your boons are good-for-nothing!" The nymph got annoyed with Sukhvir and in an irritated mood, she said:

"Sukhvir, please go away. If my boons are good-for-nothing, you must have a curse from me! Whoever sees first your face as you leave me, he shall die on the spot! Go away! Never again should you come back to me!"

The nymph of the forest left Sukhvir to his fate and faded out.

Sukhvir, sad and downcast turned towards his village. He felt very angry with the nymph because he had lost also the little earning he was getting by selling fruits.

A little later, he was surprised by the same bandit who stood on the narrow forest path and who said, laughing:

"Today I'll not give you any chance to answer me back. You leave your basket on the spot or else I'll kill you instantly!"

His words turned on himself. The moment Sukhvir looked up and stared into the robber's



eyes, the robber fell dead on the spot, as per the curse of the nymph upon Sukhvira.

Sukhvira lost no time to take the dead body of the robber to the village and told the chieftain, that after a big fight he managed to kill Gajendra. He even showed his previous day's knife-wound to prove his claim. The chieftain informed about it to king.

On getting the good news the

king immediately rewarded Sukhvira with one lakh rupees. Sukhvira had not only become rich overnight but had also become a hero of the village. He searched in the forest and recovered his lost gold too!

"How amazing it is that while the nymph's boons failed to bring me prosperity, her curse brought it!" he often whispered to his wife, laughing.



SHOUTING ONE'S WAY TO THRONE



One day a lioness asked her husband, "Why do you climb the rock and roar once every day?"

"That is how I continue to be king of the forest!"

A donkey who overheard this said to himself, "Now I know the secret of becoming the king of the forest?" He climbed a rock and began neighing as loudly as he could.

"What are you doing?" his wife asked him.

"Wait and get ready to be treated like a queen," he said.

When the donkey made the ritual shout for the second day, a merchant who was camping in the forest caught him and led him away.

"Before one shouts, one should be sure of one's strength!" said his wife, sighing.



THE INFALLIBLE

Aditya, the Prime Minister of King Bharat Dev, had grown old. He desired to retire. The king requested him to appoint someone to that high post according to his own choice.

Aditya took interviews of a number of youths from the nobility. He found two of them excelling all the others in many respects.

He led the two candidates into a room. Inside it was a gold-studded chair.

"Young men, I found both of you highly qualified and almost perfect in every respect. A minister ought to be infallible. Who between you thinks himself to be infallible? Please occupy the chair," said Aditya.

One of the two young men immediately rushed to occupy the chair.

"A minister ought to be infallible, but he should not think he is infallible," said Aditya and he appointed the other young man to the post!



SIGNS OF A GROWING LANGUAGE

"What is so funny, grandpa?" Rajesh, who found Prof. Chowdhury convulsing with an uncontrollable laughter while reading a book, asked.

"It's an anecdote attributed to a Frenchman. He was quite puzzled to discover that to be quick was to be fast; to be tied was to be fast; to spend liberally was being fast and even not to eat was to fast!" said Grandpa and he added, "Elsewhere I had read yet another Frenchman's enigma. He read a sentence, 'Should Mr. Noble, who sits for this Constituency, consent to stand again, he will have an easy walk-over!' To sit in the sense of being a member of an assembly or parliament or a committee—as we say a sitting member—and to stand in the sense of contesting an election, and to have a walk-over in the sense of winning a victory, are expressions they find difficult to appreciate."

"Don't Englishmen find such difficulties with the French language?" asked Reena.

"Of course they do. Any language that continues to grow not only imbibes new words, but also develops new meanings for existing words. There are 400,000 words in the English language according to a calculation made some years ago. Even then it goes on absorbing new words."

"400,000 words!" exclaimed Rajesh.

"Don't you worry. You won't have to use the whole lot of it. A working journalist who uses the largest number of words uses less than 20,000. A common labourer is known to do with a little over 1,500 words! But, I'm sure, you already know much more than that!" said Grandpa with a chuckle.



DID YOU KNOW?

St Mary's Church in Fort St. George, Madras built in 1680 is the oldest British building to be seen in India.



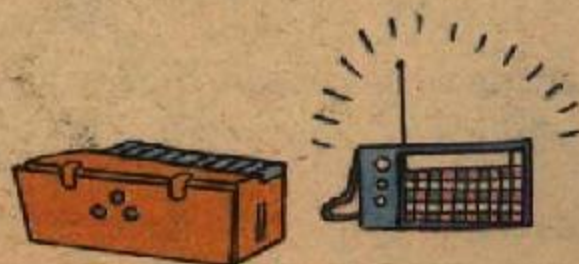
The Great Wall of China is the only man-made monument that astronauts can see from the outer space.

Three U.S. Presidents died on July 4. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on 4th July 1826 while James Monroe died on 4th July 1831.



Webster took 36 years to complete his English dictionary.

Harmonium's use was till recently forbidden in any programme of the All India Radio.



—N. Srinivas

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PICKS FROM THE WISE

Education is what remains when we have forgotten all that we have been taught.

—George Savile

If the animals had reason, they would act just as ridiculous as we menfolks do.

—Josh Billings

Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.

—Abraham Lincoln



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The Maltova Gang to the rescue...

It was a hot, summer day. Daboo was polishing his bicycle. The gang had assembled at his house and were setting off for a long, cool swim. "Don't forget your thermos flasks of Maltova and the sandwiches," Daboo's mother called.

They set off tinkling the bells of their shiny bikes. Happy as larks. A cool breeze fanned their faces and the koel called out from a mango tree. It was a beautiful day indeed.

The Blow-out

Suddenly they heard a loud bang. Oh dear, Daboo's bike's had a blow-out. Oh no, it had to happen today. The gang

were terribly disappointed.

But as they wheeled their bike up to Daboo, a strange thing happened. A black car at breakneck speed came tearing down the road. And collided with a passing cyclist. The car slowed for an instant, then sped away.

The Maltova Gang in action

"Wait" shouted Venu. But the car didn't stop. As the driver sped away. Venu managed to catch a glimpse of the number plate. "I'm going to see to the cyclist", said Daboo. Malti ran to call for an ambulance but it was little Minnie who saved the day as she triumphantly fished out a 50 paise coin from her pocket.

The boy was badly hurt. "Don't worry," comforted Daboo, "help is on the way". Now he was thankful for the first aid lessons he had received as a scout. "Help me", he said to Salim and together they tied a make shift tourniquet. To their great relief, the bleeding stopped.

The Ambulance Arrives

A siren was heard and a white ambulance rushed to the spot. In a trice the doctor took over. "Well done, young fellow", said the doctor later. "Your prompt action saved the boy's life. And I'm sure the police will catch the culprit." "It wasn't just me", said Daboo. "Well done, Maltova Gang"

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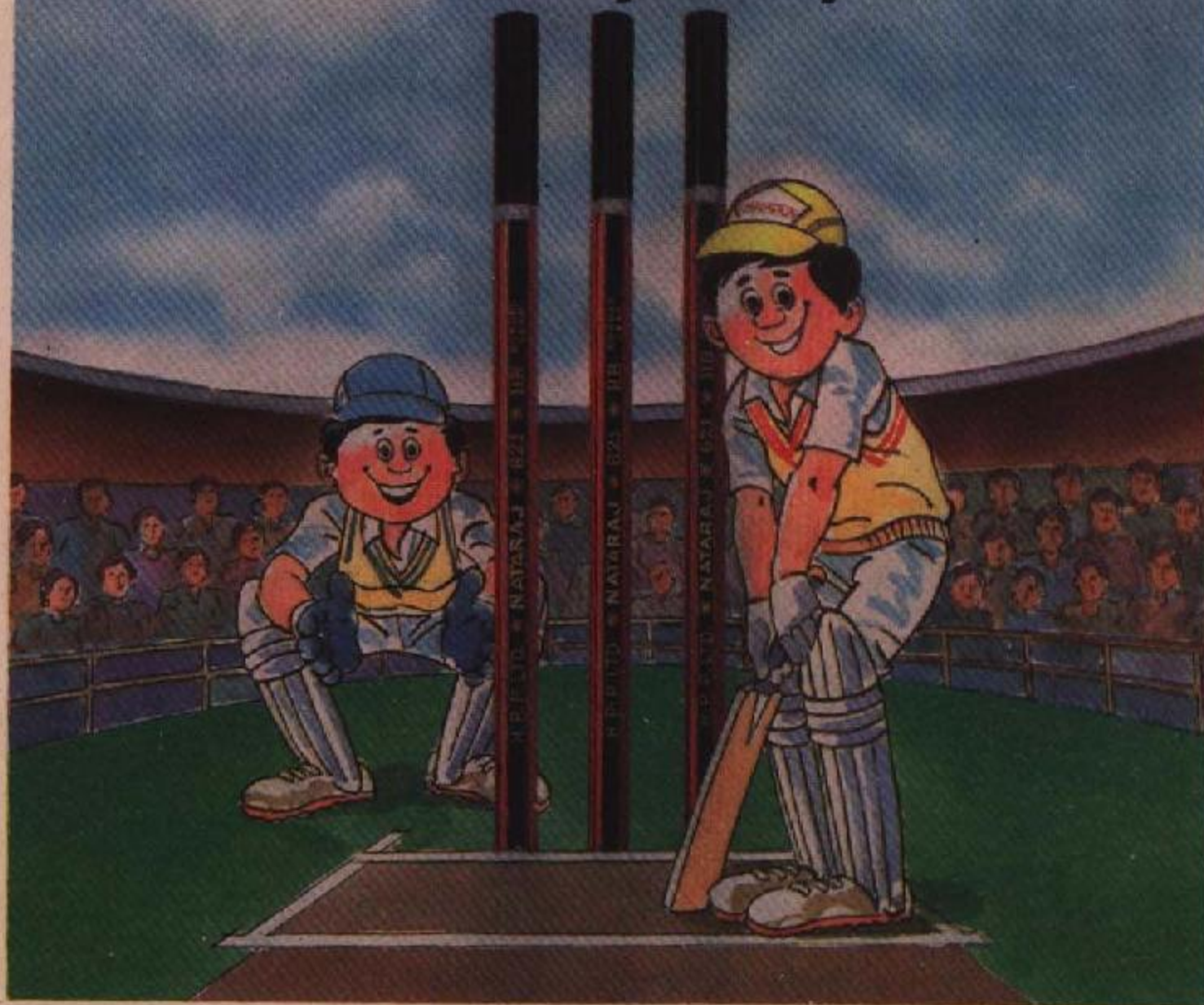
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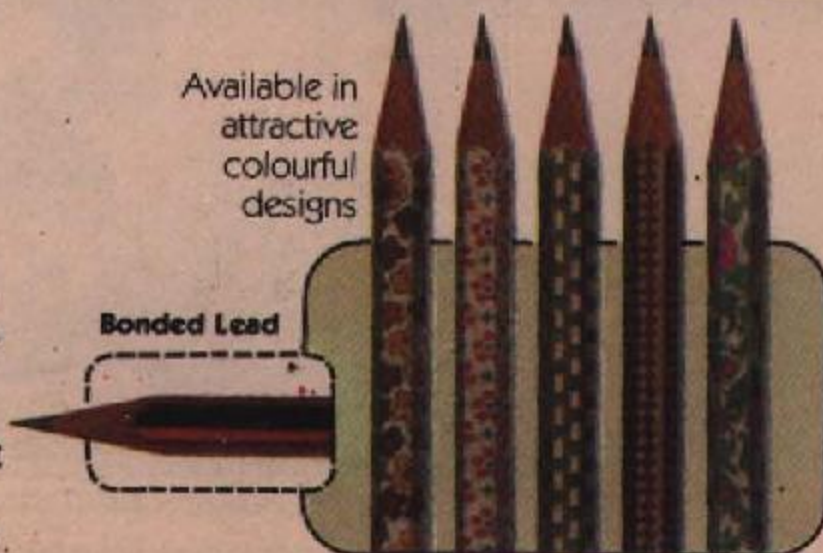
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